

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 098130  
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO USMISSION GENEVA 8582

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 098130

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION ANKARA INFO SECSTATE, DEA HQS  
WASHDC, AMMAN, BEIRUT, CAIRO, MARSEILLE, PARIS FROM DAMASCUS  
APRIL 28:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2715

ANKARA FOR NCO R.D. WARNER

PARIS FOR NCO R.D. PICINI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR SY LE

SUBJ: OPIUM CULTIVATION BEKAA VALLEY LEBANON

REF: DAMASCUS 1145 (NOTAL)

1. NCO SUTTER MET WITH SYRIAN NARCOTIC POLICE APRIL 27  
TO DISCUSS FURTHER OPIUM CULTIVATION IN BEKAA AREA OF  
LEBANON. SYRIANS WERE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ESTIMATE  
OF 1977 CROP PLANTINGS, BUT HAD SOME FAIRLY HARD INFORMA-  
TION ON WHAT THEY DESCRIBED AS 1976 TEST CROP AND INDIVIDUALS  
PRESENTLY INVOLVED WITH OPIUM CULTIVATION AND TRAFFICKING.

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2. SYRIAN INFORMANT SOURCES REVEAL THAT PROBABLY UP TO  
1000 DUNOMS (ONE HECTARE EQUALS TEN DUNOMS) WERE PLANTED  
IN OPIUM IN 1976 AS EXPERIMENTS. ON AVERAGE, EACH DUNOM  
YIELDED 4 KILOS OF OPIUM GUM. FIRST REFINING STEP  
OF GUM IN TURN YIELDED ONE KILO OF BASE PER EIGHT  
KILOS OF GUM. THIS WOULD BE ROUGHLY 500 KILOS OF BASE  
MAXIMUM FOR 1976 CROP.

3. SYRIANS BELIEVE THAT MOST OF 1976 CROP BOUGHT BY ELIAS AL-ANTOURI, BRAZILIAN OF LEBANESE ORIGIN. LEBANESE MIDDLEMAN WORKING WITH AL-ANTOURI IDENTIFIED BY SYRIANS IS MOHAMMAD MELHEM QASSEM. NO MORE DATA ON TWO PRESENTLY AVAILABLE.

4. SYRIANS SAY THAT ON BASIS OF LAST YEAR'S EXPERIMENT, LEBANESE WITH TURKISH HELP, HAVE DECIDED TO PLANT GREATER HECTARAGE USING TRANSPLANT METHOD FROM SEED BEDS RATHER THAN BROADCAST METHOD OF PLANTING. TRANSPLANTING SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY END OF JUNE AND SYRIANS FEEL THEY SHOULD THEN HAVE GOOD IDEA OF HECTARAGE INVOLVED WITH 1977 CROP. IN ADDITION TO DEIR AL-AHMAR AREA WHICH SYRIAN AGENTS WERE UNABLE TO VISIT ON ACCOUNT OF ARMED CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS, SYRIANS BELIEVE PLANTINGS WILL TAKE PLACE IN FOLLOWING BEKAA VILLAGES:

TARYA, TABHA, SH'AT, YUNIN, HOR TAQLA, BRITAL, AND REYAQ. AGENTS HAVE OBSERVED PERSONALLY SEEDLINGS IN LATTER VILLAGES.

5. REPORTED PRICE FOR 1976 GUM WAS 400 LEBANESE POUNDS PER KILO. OTHER NAMES MENTIONED IN TRAFFICKING ARE MUHAMMAD HAMIEH AND HUSSEIN HAMIEH, BOTH LEBANESE, AND TURKISH KURD, RAMDAN SEIFO.

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6. SYRIANS BELIVE MOST OF 1976 CROP HAD ALREADY LEFT LEBANON FOR EUROPE. THEY SPECULATE LOGICAL DESTINATION OF BASE FOR FURTHER REFINING TO BE MARSEILLE.

7. AS MORE INFORMATION IS DEVELOPED, IT WILL BE PASSED ON TO ADDRESSEES. THEROS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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